

State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

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NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 5, 2002

02-2516

M/V COLUMBIA RETURNING TO SERVICE JUNE 5, 2002 - ON TIME, WITHIN BUDGET -

M/V *Columbia*, the largest ship in the Alaska Marine Highway's fleet, returns to revenue service today, June 5th with her scheduled sailing southbound from Ketchikan. The *Columbia* begins weekly round trip service between Bellingham, WA and Skagway, AK, with intermediate stops in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau, Haines and Skagway with additional southbound stops in Sitka.

Columbia left Cascade General Inc. (CGI) shipyard in Portland, Oregon, on May 30th – on schedule and within budget – after a major improvement project. In recognition of CGI's efforts, the AMHS Vessel Operations Manager, Captain Jack Meyers, presented Bruce Dummer, Senior V.P. of Finance, with an oversized replica of a \$14,000 incentive check in a ceremony at the yard just prior to the ship's departure. The check represents the monies earned by CGI for the early completion of a significant project milestone.

The five million dollar, federally funded Food Service and Ship Systems Improvement modernization project began in early November. During this six-month shipyard upgrade, the *Columbia's* entire food service spaces, including galley, cafeteria and dining rooms, were stripped out to bare metal and replaced. Additional significant improvements included installation of a modern linen loading and handling system, a consolidated refrigeration system, and the replacement of all windows in the solarium. The vessel was also drydocked for routine underwater machinery and hull valve maintenance.

During the shipyard ceremony, in addition to presenting "the check," Captain Meyers read a congratulatory letter from the Alaska Marine Highway System's General Manager Captain George Capacci. Said Capacci, "Please pass along my personal 'well done' to your dedicated Cascade General craftsmen for another AMHS federal project very successfully completed. Cascade General's continued full-service shipyard support of the Alaska Marine Highway System is greatly appreciated."

To travel on the M/V *Columbia* or any other ship on Alaska's Marine Highway, visit www.alaska.gov/ferry or call, 1-800-642-0066 or (907) 465-3941

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